THE STUDENT COUNCIL
IN THE
SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOL

BY

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A FIELD REPORT

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science in Education
in Drake University

Des Moines, Iowa
August, 1952

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Democracy must function in
the school that would educate
for democracy.

--Hollis L. Caswell.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Student participation in the formation of school policies and in the planning of school activities has been working its way more and more into the educational program, especially in the last thirty years. Many school administrators have begun to realize the great possibility in student participation as a tool for building democratic ideals and an active responsible citizenry. A contribution to the development of this valuable activity is the growing desire on the part of adolescents to be allowed to express their views in regard to those policies which affect them in their life. The second World War and the years following have brought a stronger focus on the development of democratic ideals throughout the world. This has made it more evident that democratic living in the schools of America is a necessity if those schools are going to develop good citizens.

Student participation in the government of the school can and should be a vital part of the educational program. One of the most important functions of the school should be to develop youths into good citizens who will take active, not a passive, interest in the democratic form of

government. Since this is conceived to be one of the primary functions of the school, it should provide a definite type of training in the democratic way of life. This cannot be done under the traditional school administrative organization in which the students have no voice whatsoever in the formation of school policies. It is granted that many phases of school organization and administration are established by law, while others must definitely be handled by the faculty; still, others may be left partly or wholly to the students themselves. Harl L. Douglass writes that matters which may be left to the students are: conduct; care of property; housekeeping; student activities; the supervising of student publications; honors to be awarded; the orientation of new students; and intramural programs.[1]

In providing learning experiences for citizens in a democracy, it is not meant that the administration should replace faculty autonomy with student autonomy. Instead, the school organization should allow students to practice management and direction of their affairs with recommendations and counseling from the faculty. Present day schools provide many actual experiences for the students; therefore, why not make use of student participation to give the students supervised practice in making democracy work? Such

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[1]Harl L. Douglass (ed.), The High School Curriculum (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1947), p. 363.

practice today will provide more skillful citizens for tomorrow. In regard to this, Terry writes:

> In the democracies of the Western world, the quality of government is determined by the civic ability and idealism of the common man, for on his shoulders fall the full weight of the burdens of management. Despite its power for weal or woe, progress in politics has not kept pace with progress in other fields of human endeavor. With the aid of the physical sciences, man has greatly increased his control of the material environment. Modern civilization cannot be maintained, unless similar progress is made in the arts of social control.
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> In the school, as in the community, government exercises a predominating influence. The student council is in position to mobilize the full force of the school more powerfully than any other student organization. No other agency can so effectively promote a comprehensive and varied program of social activities in the interest of the entire pupil population. In no other organization can pupils encounter a range and variety of genuine social problems that is sufficient to give them the training they need in the practical arts of citizenship.[1]

The strongest argument for student participation is that it produces a higher type of citizenship by providing the students with an opportunity to follow the democratic principles laid down by the school. Through this means, they become impressed by the similarity of school experience and life experience.

The transfer from school life to adult life is more likely to be successful if the conditions in the school are

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[1]Paul W. Terry, Supervising Extra-Curricular Activities (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1930), p. 83.

similar to desirable conditions outside the school. Student cooperation should develop the individual into an intelligent, well-rounded, public spirited citizen by leading him to a realization of his personal responsibilities.

The second value that is to arise from student participation is the improved moral tone of the school and a better socialized atmosphere. The students feel that they have a part in the school and do not feel that they "have to walk the chalk line" without having any voice as to where the line should be placed. In studies of student participation, schools have consistently reported that a greater degree of loyalty is cultivated and there is evidence of the development of self-confidence and self-assertion on the part of the students.

In student participation, there is the best chance to choose those who have the qualities of leaders and give them practice and training in leadership. Not only will these leaders be trained, but those who have the qualities of good followers will have training to do their part. It gives the students a chance to do some reflective thinking and a chance to act upon their conclusions.

McKown reported that:

> Responsibility for good government under any democratic form of organization rests upon all, and the school should give preparation for the political life of tomorrow in training its pupils to meet responsibilities, developing initiative,

> awakening social insight and causing each to shoulder a fair share of the government of the school.[1]

The school of today must develop an understanding of democracy that will cause a lasting devotion to its principles. To be good citizens, youth must learn not only why democracy is desirable but also how to make it work. Too often youth is expected to conform to all the policies, rules, and regulations without having any voice in setting up those policies, rules, and regulations. The foundation of a democracy is the consent of the governed; therefore, the officials of the school should attempt to obtain that consent in the formation of policies which can be left wholly or partially to the judgment of the students.

An effectively organized and functioning student council would achieve the goal of a more responsible and intelligent citizenry in a democratic society. One of the interests and needs of youth is to feel that they are responsible, necessary persons in the social situation of their lives. It is possible to achieve this through the student council. Most schools place too low a ceiling on student participation in organized school life, and as a result, are standing in the way of the fullest development of the student body. Part of the amount of the real success of a student program lies in the amount of youth participa-

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[1]Harry C. McKown, The Student Council (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1944), p. 31.

tion for which provision is made. The regimentation of students by school administrators, faculty, or student organizations violates the nature of the educative process. Regimentation by edict from any individual or group of individuals should not be allowed to exist in any educational institution.

There are several different types of organization of student councils. Paul W. Terry discusses these:

> Although plans for the participation of pupils in government of the school differ greatly in detail, it is possible to distinguish several types and under them to classify the various plans. The fivefold classification which is used in this volume includes the informal, the specific service, simple council, complex council, and school-city types. It is necessary to call attention to form of organization because not two types make the same demands upon the intelligence of the faculty and the student body. They emphasize different kinds of social training. They vary in respect to the extent of the opportunity afforded for pupils to participate. Local considerations, such as size of school, rapidity of turnover in faculty and student body, and the social development of the community, are affected in different ways.[1]

In the informal type of student government, no formal organization of pupils is instituted to take an active part in the control of the school. The administrator invites pupils to share the responsibilities of government to a limited extent. The basis of cooperation is as variable as it is indefinite. Leaders of the student body are called in to discuss school problems. As against the limitations stated, the following are the advantages of the informal

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[1]Terry, op. cit., p. 86.

type as given by Terry:

1. Pupils (helping) gain valuable experience in social cooperation.

2. They learn how to advance the plans of persons in authority.

3. Much better than absolutist regime.

4. In some communities, it may be the most advanced form of control that the patrons of the school will be prepared to accept.

5. May serve as approach to more representative form of government.

6. Administrators newly come to schools that are not familiar with the more advanced forms may find it the best plan with which to make a beginning.[1]

The informal type of student government could be used to advantage when the student body is not prepared to undertake a formal type of participation in the government. Provision should be made for laying a foundation for inaugurating an active student council when this method is employed. Reasons why it would not be wise to use this type indefinitely are the following: does not resemble forms of community government closely enough; it is not designed to train leaders and followers in sufficient numbers; initiative of the students is not stimulated; and there is no sense of responsibility given to the students.

When the specific service type of participation is utilized, a group of students are assigned a single school

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[1] Ibid.

service, such as noon recreation, parties, or entertainment. The members of the group may either be selected by the faculty or elected by the student body. This type of participation may be used as an approach to a more centralized and comprehensive type of government. It is simple in organization and does achieve superior standards of service through the concentration of the energies of each group of students on a single type of work. There are several disadvantages in the use of this type in that there is frequent conflict of authority, often a duplication of effort, no permanent central organization, the student body often does not select its own leaders, and there is no sense of responsibility felt toward the student body by the members of the group.

The simple council is the third type which can be utilized by the small school. Its central feature is a single group of students which represent the entire student body. It is concerned with the entire range of student interests and its influence is felt by all other organizations. Three methods are employed in the selection of members: appointed; automatic selection; or elected by the student body. The selection of representatives is important in regard to the educational values which may be derived. It is felt by the writer that the student body should be given the privilege of selecting its own representatives, since that is the method employed in democratic procedure.

Because of the complexity of the remaining two types of participation in government, they will be discussed only briefly here. The complex council type usually has the authority vested in two or more central organizations. The main value of this type is the similarity of it to the state and national governmental bodies. The other form, the school-city type, is patterned after the government of the city in which the students live. It does much to acquaint the students with adult government in their community and it often helps the parents to see the advantages of student participation in government. Care must be taken in the use of these two types in the small school since they may impose on the school's rigid forms which may not be precisely adapted to the needs of children and which children may not readily understand. The size of the student body may also be considered in that the small school does not have enough students to undertake the operation of too complex a type of organization.

In many schools it is unwise for the formal type of organization to be attempted without first laying the groundwork which will insure a greater amount of success. The first two types may be utilized with success in most situations and should be used until the students are able to enter into a more formal type.

Often the objectives of the student council are not understood even where such an organization is in operation. For any movement to be successful, its objectives must be understood by all. Following is a list of objectives for student councils as stated by Harold D. Meyer:

1. To substitute real democracy as a form of social and self-control in place of teacher dominance; in other words, to substitute internal for external control.

2. To acquaint pupils with the machinery, duties, and responsibilities of the individual in a democracy.

3. To develop respect in the group for group-made regulations.

4. To develop a spirit of willing cooperation between pupil and pupil, and to encourage a closer relationship between the pupil and faculty.

5. To develop qualities of good leadership and intelligent followership.

6. To secure, through the wise use of teacher guidance, the elimination of those corrupt practices which have worked in the scheme of democracy as it functions in civil life.

7. To afford pupils here and now the opportunity to live in a democratic organization, thus giving them the opportunity to practice with satisfaction the life of a good citizen.[1]

Even though these objectives were set down by Meyer in 1926, they still are very applicable to the present conditions of society. The writer did not include a study

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[1]Harold D. Meyer, A Handbook of Extra-Curricular Activities in the High School (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1926), p. 118.

of objectives of student councils in the state in this survey; however, a study of council activities was made. The results of the survey indicate that these points given by Meyer are incorporated into the activities of the councils.

The objectives of each student council should be clearly stated in its constitution. Some councils prefer to have detailed statements of objectives, while others make only a brief statement. Following is a statement of the objectives of the student council of the Earlham High School, Earlham, Iowa:

> The object of the student council shall be to represent the ideas and feelings of the student body, to promote the welfare of the school, and to develop a greater feeling of cooperation in the school.[1]

In making a survey of student councils in Illinois in 1940, Baker found the following purposes of student councils given here in the order of frequency mentioned:

1. To promote the best interests of the school.
2. To bring about cooperation between pupils and faculty.
3. To develop school spirit.
4. To establish a system of pupil participation.
5. To create good citizenship in the school.

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[1] Earlham High School Handbook, 1951-1952, prepared by the handbook committee of the 1951 Student Council (Earlham, Iowa: Earlham High School, 1951), p. 2.

6. To unify all pupil organizations under one control.
7. To assist in directing extracurriculum activities.
8. To promote the general welfare of the school.
9. To develop cheerful obedience to lawful authority.
10. To help foster in the student-body high scholarship.
11. To encourage participation in extracurriculum activities.
12. To express public opinion.
13. To promote and enlarge social contacts of pupils.
14. To exercise ideals of cooperative government.
15. To teach democracy.
16. To develop courtesy.
17. To teach responsibility.
18. To teach cooperation.
19. To insure social equality and justice to all pupils in the benefits and responsibilities of school life.
20. To develop leadership.[1]

According to earlier studies which had been made of the schools of Iowa, the student councils which had been inaugurated were not accomplishing the results which are possible through such an organization. Since no study had been made since 1935, as far as could be determined, the writer wished to determine whether the student council was

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[1]G. E. Baker, "Student Councils in Illinois," School Review, XLVIII (December, 1940), 773.

being used now with greater advantage than had been previously reported.

The writer feels that many student councils are quite ineffective and often are used only as a tool of the administrator to accomplish what would not be possible to accomplish through other means. Also, it is felt that many councils could be made more effective through a study of their organization and activities. It is the desire of the writer to make some contribution toward the improvement of student participation in school government through this study.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

Trends in the Use of Student Councils

Thirty years ago, most student councils were used for the purpose of carrying on social activities of the school. Today the majority of the student councils in the secondary schools carry on a much larger number of activities. Many of these activities were through at one time necessary to be left entirely to the administration. Some present day administrators still hold to this dictatorial method of thinking; however, most administrations welcome the opportunity to have the youth of the school entering into policy formation and other similar activities.

There is a much larger number of student councils which have their own student courts for use in trying and punishing violators of school policies and regulations. This activity must be very closely supervised by a competent faculty advisor to prevent misuse of the organization. Usually students are more severe in the judgment of their peers than are members of the faculty. If the proper students are placed on the court, better results are often achieved than when the faculty members govern all disci-

plinary matters. If judiciary power is granted the student council, it is wise to have the student court a separate body. The council should not be burdened with judiciary matters if it is given sufficient activities to supervise. More respect is usually granted the student court also when it is a separate body. Classroom discipline should not be referred to the student court. Disciplinary matters in regard to policies and regulations set forth by the student council may be referred to the student court.

Many student councils supervise the selling of Christmas Seals, Tuberculosis Seals, Red Cross, and Community Chest drives, and the collecting and delivering of food and clothing to needy families. Such activities can do much to develop good citizens in the schools. Other community projects are often undertaken by student councils in an effort to make their community a better place to live.

A large number of student councils help backward pupils, supervise study halls, and welcome new students. Such activities can be used to advantage in the small schools due to the great teacher load. If supervised properly, this will make it possible for teachers to do a more efficient job than would be possible without student council help in such matters.

Student councils also are being used to regulate awards given to students for participating in school activ-

ities, including athletics. Some student councils require students of their school to earn a minimum number of points through participation in extracurricular activities before graduation. This has been brought about through the realization of the fact that the students who need most the values received from such participation are those who have to be given added stimulus to do so. This helps to develop more valuable citizens for the community.

Criteria for Conducting and Forming Student Councils

To be able to provide for more effective student participation in school government a statement of criteria must be presented. The National Association of Student Councils has suggested the following standards:

I. A good student council possesses power, authority, and responsibility.

   A. It is the voice of the student body.

   B. It purposes and carries out activities for school improvement.

   C. It coordinates the extracurricular activities of the school, enlisting the entire personnel.

   D. In doing the above, it
      1. Promotes an understanding of the practice of democratic citizenship.
      2. Trains student leaders.

   E. Its source of power lies in the delegation to it by the principal of authority and responsibility for action within specific or general areas; provided, that if in the judgment of the principal, a projected council activity seems detrimental to the best interests of the school, such activity can be vetoed by him.

II. A good student council practices accepted democratic principles in its operations; its constitution and by-laws are carefully planned and democratically conceived.

III. A good student council is supported on the part of the faculty and principal by a true understanding of the council's role; in addition, the attitude of the principal and faculty is sympathetic.

IV. A good student council has a sound functioning organization.

V. An effective student council has prestige, and enlists the ready cooperation of the student body.[1]

McKown lists the following steps which should be followed when initiating a student council:

1. The necessity of a felt need.
2. Education of the faculty.
3. Education of the student body.
4. Education of the community.
5. Developing the constitution.
6. Adopting the constitution.
7. Initial organization.
8. Installation of the council.[2]

Before a student council can be inaugurated in any school, it is essential that all persons of the school community should want it and be prepared to make it a success. It is better never to have had a council than to have tried

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[1]McKown, op. cit., pp. 332-333.

[2]Ibid., p. 97.

it and failed. The administration, faculty, and student body must realize before beginning such a program that much time is required in organizing a council which is to be effective. Patience and wholehearted cooperation are important factors to a successful conclusion of this democratic endeavor. It is seldom possible to set up such an organization and have it reach its maximum effectiveness in less than three to five years. Training in the democratic way of life must be obtained before the council will function effectively. If students were already trained for this type of program, few schools would be found lacking such an organization. Many administrators who do not provide for student participation in school government are more content to "sit back" using their dictatorial methods because of the time necessary to give such training. Students cannot be expected to use mature judgment unless given ample opportunity to practice democratic living and obtain experience through such practice. Experience is necessary to enable anyone to do a job well.

The success of the student council depends not only upon the students, but to a large extent upon the faculty member or members. The most capable members of the faculty should be selected for membership on the council. Their guidance is vital to the success of the organization. The students should feel that the presence

of faculty members on the council is to aid them in their actions, not to act as a "damper" on their activities. Too often the administrator "runs" the council from year to year, not allowing the council to have any great amount of authority, but only to act as a social agent for carrying on certain activities as he so desires. Regularly elected faculty members rather than a permanent sponsor would help prevent such circumstances.

McKown sets forth the following principles for the student council sponsor:

1. The faculty should recognize and accept its responsibility in electing sponsors.
2. The sponsor must really represent the faculty.
3. The sponsor must understand and appreciate the participation idea.
4. The sponsor must be sympathetic with the participation idea.
5. The sponsor must be discriminatingly loyal to the council.
6. The sponsor should be an enthusiastic member but not a "teacher."
7. The sponsor should not make himself too conspicuous in council meetings.
8. The sponsor must win and hold student respect and confidence.
9. The importance of the sponsor's personality should neither be underrated nor overrated.
10. The sponsor should have a wholesome sense of humor.

11. The sponsor should have a good sense of relative values.

12. The sponsor should give much time and thought to the council program.

13. The sponsor should stress and practice cooperation.

14. The sponsor should not be afraid to experiment.

15. The sponsor should not attempt to prevent all council mistakes.

16. The sponsor should never become discouraged.

17. The sponsor should study himself and, if necessary, make personal readjustments.

18. The sponsor should continue his training.[1]

From these principles, the sponsor must be elected by his fellow faculty members in order for him to be the best representative. If this condition exists, the faculty will feel more responsible for the success of the student council and will take more interest in its activities. This will provide for a better council.

The student body is likely to be the biggest problem involved in securing an active, effective council. Before inaugurating the council, the student body must realize the following: It is its duty to elect the most capable students to the council; responsibility for actions of the council lies upon the shoulders of the entire student body; and it must realize that many problems will be encountered

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[1]Ibid., p. 301.

in the early operation of the council. It must be responsible for the election of capable leaders, then give them their wholehearted support even when difficulties arise. It must know and feel that the faculty and administration is working for it, not against it. Too often, students jump to conclusions, decide that someone is against them, and doom the council to failure. As a result of these factors, it is wise to take must time in laying the foundation for the council in order to avoid an organization which has no power and no support.

The following "don'ts" have been given for a student government which are valuable in setting up a council:

> Don't undertake student participation unless you have faith in young people and can get that feeling of faith over to them. If you are timid or distrustful of what they may do, they will detect it and the enterprise will probably fail.
>
> Don't make your safeguards the most prominent thing about your council. Of course, the principal and the Board of Education have veto power over the council but avoid the suspicious approach.
>
> It is best not to mimic other governments. The government of the school should be unique to that school. If it is patterned after other forms of government, students are likely to think they are playing at it.
>
> It is not wise to take over the system of another school intact. What works in one school will not work in another and the government must be characteristic of the particular school.
>
> Don't set up a list of eligibility rules for office which will exclude the people the students really want. Students who are behavior problems and make low grades often change when they feel the school is theirs. To exclude them from their franchise and their right to hold office only makes them worse.

> Don't attempt to control elections or to otherwise 'load the dice.' This belies the faith and confidence in young people, and this faith and confidence is a basic requirement for the success of the enterprise.[1]

It is important that the student council operate under the authority of a written constitution. With the duties specifically defined in the constitution, the council may advance more rapidly and will be much more efficient. Without the responsibilities and duties set forth in this manner, the council will feel unsure of itself, the student body will not feel sure of what can be accomplished by such an organization, and conditions may be such that exercise of the veto power may be frequently necessary. No council should copy the constitution of another council in its entirety, but copies of constitutions should be secured from other schools before the final writing of the constitution in order to profit by the experience of other organizations. Students should play a prominent part in the writing of the constitution. When students of the Earlham High School, Earlham, Iowa, felt the need for a stronger student council organization, a handbook committee was selected to prepare a constitution and student handbook. After much time was spent during the summer months, the committee presented the constitution to the administration and the student

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[1]L. V. Koos, "Sharing in School Government," School Review, LIV (January, 1946), 9-10.

body for approval and ratification. The constitution which they devised is given in the Appendix.[1]

Much groundwork must be laid before the final organization of the council. The students must be prepared to vote intelligently for their representatives. Too often persons are selected to fill some important student office because of athletic ability, social standing, or some other characteristic which does not necessarily mean that such candidates will be capable leaders in student government activities. Some authorities advise that special requirements be set up which eliminates some of the so-called undesirable persons. There are no special requirements other than age and place of citizenship and residence in adult government, so it seems undesirable to have such restrictions in student government. If the student body feels responsible for student council actions, such conditions are unlikely to occur.

As the final step in the initiation of the council, impressive installation ceremonies may do much to help the students realize the importance of the organization.

In regard to the problems encountered in student council administration, J. A. Sheldon writes:

> The major problems in the administration of pupil participation in school control are (1) incompetency

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[1]Appendix, p. 70.

of the leaders, (2) lack of pupil interest, (3) too much teacher direction, and (4) lack of faculty cooperation. Unless special qualifications are required, and sometimes even then, the pupils tend to elect to office persons who are popular with the group regardless of their abilities as leaders. The pupils tend to choose athletic heroes who are frequently helpless as officials. It is possible that the longer pupils participate in school control, the more will they exercise care in the selection of their officers. Not unlike adults, pupils fail to maintain an active interest in governmental affairs. This problem . . . is a challenge to the faculty advisor. He can do much to renew and maintain the pupils' interest. Ranking third in frequency of mention is the problem of too much teacher direction. In many situations teachers do so much directing that they, rather than the pupils, are doing the governing. Pupils are sensitive to this condition and quickly lose interest in the activities. Supervision of the pupils' organizations participating in school control is a delicate matter and must be done with utmost care. It might be better to allow the pupils to make a few mistakes than to keep too close a check on their procedures. This situation causes a problem in administration. The promoter of the plan of pupil participation in the control of the school might do well to 'sell' the idea to the other teachers before the plan is inaugurated.

Other problems reported included pupil 'politics,' taking advantage of the privileges given the pupils, and disproportion between the amount of time necessary and the results achieved, and the irresponsibility of pupils.[1]

Most of the problems mentioned above can be handled with less difficulty if faculty and students realize that their wholehearted cooperation is needed for its success. The administrator must prepare the way for participation of the students in school affairs by taking the students

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[1]J. A. Sheldon, "Pupil Participation in School Control in High Schools of Iowa," School Review, XLIII (February, 1935), 195.

into his confidence and showing them the benefits to be derived, the dangers to be avoided due to rash moves or lack of interest, the wholehearted desire on the part of the faculty to cooperate, stimulate, sympathize, and aid in every way to make the plan a success.

C. P. Archer writes that:

> He must show them the possibilities for development in the plan as well as the responsibilities. He must fill them with a determination to overcome their selfish interests for the good of the entire student body. They must catch the enthusiasm of service to their schoolmates to make 'our school' a better one for all concerned.
>
> The students must be brought to realize the importance of selecting the best officers and of demanding that each officer who accepts the honor should sacrifice for the good of the people he represents. In short, much time and effort must be spent in carefully preparing the soil for planting the seeds of a democratic government. Lack of cooperation has been one of the chief causes of failure.
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> The faculty must also be prepared for the inception of the plan, be thoroughly committed to it, and have faith in its success. Every teacher must realize the merits of the plan and the details of operation and be willing to give time, attention, and patience to stimulate and direct the pupils to exert their greatest efforts to keep up the enthusiasm. No administrator can afford to attempt student government without the wholehearted cooperation of every member of the faculty--in fact, the enthusiastic cooperation of every member.
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> The administrator must be thoroughly committed to the plan himself. An attitude of 'willing to try, but doubt its success' can succeed only by a miracle. He must visualize it in operation in the light of his experience with school affairs and in the light of his knowledge of the local situation. After long and careful consideration, if the principal cannot attack the experiment with the greatest confidence and enthusiasm, he should not attempt it.[1]

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[1]C. P. Archer, "School Government As An Educative Agency," School Review, XXXI (June, 1923), 434.

Many of the problems which are encountered in the operation of a student council are caused by the lack of faith in the organization which is shown by the administrator and the faculty. Many administrators and faculty members seem to be "daring" their students to make a success of the organization. It is true that few, if any, student councils will be very efficient at the beginning, but where is a new adult organization found with similar duties which has a high rate of efficiency? The efficiency of the organization will improve with experience and with expert guidance on the part of the faculty members. G. E. Baker states that:

> It takes three to five years to develop a good council. Pupil participation is a cooperative enterprise and needs the sympathetic support of both pupils and faculty. There is also necessity of training pupils to realize their opportunities for self-expression through the organization.[1]

It is very easy for pupils, faculty members, and administrators to get impatient with the progress being made, thereby decreasing the possibility of making the organization a real success. Terry has given the following as being the most frequent causes of failure:

> In the early years of its development, student government was discredited by numerous failures. When it became popular, many principals were suddenly seized with the idea, constitutions were hastily written, officers were elected, and without

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[1]Baker, op. cit., p. 779.

more ado the problem was dumped into the unskilled hands of innocent pupils. Strange as it may seem, experienced schoolmen acted on the naive belief that boys and girls were as wise as their parents--if people only knew it--and that all they needed for self-government was a constitutional document and the promptings of original nature. They were entirely unconscious of the distinction between turning the school over to the pupils and sharing its government with them. They assumed that youngsters understood the meaning of self-government and were prepared to take its burdens as well as to enjoy its benefits. Some of them appear to have believed that they could shift the burdens of discipline from their own shoulders to those of the pupils. They did not anticipate the necessity of educating the student body to the new regime and they did not foresee that teachers fail to understand the new responsibilities that devolved on them.

The mistake that was made by these principals is one that has been made many times in the history of nations. It has been made whenever an enlightened few have thrust republican institution into the hands of peoples who but yesterday were savages. Their antics at self-government would be amusing, if the outcome were not so often a tragical disillusionment of the confidence of childlike men in their untutored powers. Genuine student government cannot be successfully produced in a school by feat of the principal. If this is its only foundation, it is doomed in advance to failure. In all too many cases in the past it has not had even a chance to succeed.[1]

Student participation in government is very valuable but must not be attempted until the proper groundwork has been laid.

Experiments in Student Councils

Since most administrators do realize that the student council must be derived from the particular situation

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[1]Terry, op. cit., p. 126.

which exists in any given school and community, there are many variations in activities which are carried on. Some of these variations are experiments, or were originally experiments, carried on by the student body and faculty in an attempt to achieve a more efficient organization. Some of these experiments will be reported in the following paragraphs in order that some insight may be given into the possibilities of student participation in government.

The Midwood High School in Brooklyn patterns its school government after that of New York City in order to acquaint its students with their own city government. Dues are called "taxes" and are levied each term by the students themselves. The students run their own finances; levy and collect their own taxes, and spend funds collected in this manner. This is considered to be one of the most evident strengths of this school government.[1]

The Bronxville High School, Bronxville, New York has an All-school Council with representatives of the student council, the faculty, the business office, the Board of Education, and the Parent-Teacher Association. There are as many students on the council as there are adults. This council discusses matters of vital concern to the

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[1]Personal interview, April, 1946.

school community. It is an executive as well as a deliberative body.[1]

The Friends' Central School, Overbrook, Pennsylvania, provides for the opportunity of students to meet with the faculty at specified times to discuss questions of student morale, pupil-teacher relationships, uniform disciplinary measures, and other similar topics. This has provided the faculty with the opportunity to become better acquainted with student concerns.[2]

The Baldwin School, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, student council provides for the selection of committees from time to time to make studies of school problems. One committee found it necessary to draw up a questionnaire to be submitted to the faculty and students, then made a statistical study of the results in order to make its report and recommendations.[3]

The Nora Springs High School, Nora Springs, Iowa, does not provide for a faculty sponsor of the student council. It is felt that the presence of a faculty member restricts free discussion of school problems in the council meetings. No report concerning the efficiency of the organization has been received; however, such a condition

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[1]Commission on the Relation of School and College, Adventure in American Education, Volume V, Thirty Schools Tell Their Story, prepared by the Progressive Education Association Publications (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943), p. 86.

[2]Ibid., pp. 332-333. [3]Ibid., p. 23.

might work well if the students have been given the proper training in democratic living. There is great possibility of wasted effort due to lack of proper guidance.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data used in this survey were collected by the use of questionnaires which were mailed to superintendents from selected schools throughout Iowa. Because of the desire of the writer to obtain information concerning the smaller high school, only schools having an enrollment of seventy-five to 150 pupils were included in the study. The 1951-1952 Iowa School Directory was used to determine the sampling for this study. The schools were divided alphabetically into groups of three; then to provide a random sampling, the first two of each group of three were selected to receive questionnaires. Of the 132 schools selected, 105 returned the questionnaires, giving a total return of 80 percent. The questionnaires were sent by first-class mail to encourage prompt attention by superintendents and, thus, promote a larger return from the sampling. Also, to encourage a larger return, a brief letter of explanation was enclosed with each questionnaire, addressed directly by name to the superintendent of the school.

The responses to the questionnaires were prepared

for presentation by the use of tables. The actual number of schools responding to each question, as well as the actual percentage of those participating in the study are given. Where possible, results of the 1922 survey made by C. P. Archer[1] and of the 1935 survey made by J. A. Sheldon[2] are given with corresponding data of this survey. Both of these previous surveys, as well as the present study, present data concerning the smaller schools of Iowa. In this way a partial comparison can be made in the state as to the status of student councils in smaller high schools for the past thirty years.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE OF 105 SCHOOLS SAMPLED HAVING AN ENROLLMENT OF SEVENTY-FIVE TO 150 STUDENTS, WITH STUDENT COUNCILS AS REPORTED IN 1952 SURVEY (1922 AND 1935 SURVEYS INCLUDED)

Status	1922	1935	1952
Had Student Council.....	8.7	31.5	62.9
Did not have Student Council.....	91.3	68.2	34.3
Will have Student Council in near future.....	0.0	0.0	2.8

[1]C. P. Archer, "School Government As An Educative Agency," School Review, XXXI (June, 1923), 430-438.

[2]Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 189-197.

The reports of these surveys show a marked increase in the number of small schools in Iowa having student councils. Since 1922, there has been an increase of 31.1 percent of the small high schools providing for student participation in school government. Three administrators reported that they do not have a council now, but are laying the groundwork for initiating one in their school in the near future.

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF YEARS SIXTY-SIX IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS HAVE PROVIDED FOR A STUDENT COUNCIL IN THE 1952 SURVEY

Years in Operation	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
First year	6	9.1
One year	1	1.5
Two years	5	7.5
Three years	14	21.2
Four years	5	7.5
Five years	6	9.1
Six years	6	9.1
Seven years	5	7.5
Eight years	1	1.5
Nine years	3	4.7
Ten years	6	9.1
Twelve years	1	1.5
Thirteen years	1	1.5
Fifteen years	2	3.0
Thirty-two years	1	1.5
Not specified	3	4.7

According to the 1935 survey, the schools had provided for student participation in school government for

an average of four years.[1] After comparing the 1952 survey with this average, many of these schools have not maintained a student council over the span of years covered by the three surveys. Some have evidently dropped the student council. Others have met with failure for one or more reasons. The 105 schools participating in this survey have had student councils for an average of five years. This shows that most of these student councils have been inaugurated since World War II.

Ten schools reported that they had attempted the student council but had met with failure. This failure in most instances was identified with the lack of capable leadership from the faculty. The lack of leadership by the faculty may have been partially due to the heavy load of the faculty in the small school. Also, it may have been due to the lack of training on the part of the faculty which would prepare them to direct student participation in school government. The reasons for failure are given in Table 3.

The largest number of schools having councils which had failed, reported that they had failed due to lack of pupil interest.

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[1] Ibid., p. 193.

TABLE 3

REASONS FOR FAILURE OF STUDENT COUNCILS AS REPORTED BY TEN IOWA SCHOOLS OF LESS THAN 150 ENROLLMENT IN THE 1952 SURVEY

Reasons	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Lack of capable student leadership...	1	10
Lack of capable leadership because not properly guided.....	1	10
Lack of pupil interest.....	5	50
Too much faculty direction.....	1	10
Lack of faculty cooperation and capable leadership.....	1	10
Lack of student leadership and pupil interest.....	1	10

Thirty-six schools included in the survey did not provide for a student council. Reasons given by the administrators for not having a council in their schools are given below. The reasons are presented as they were written by the administrators on the questionnaires:

> Close contact with all students and students and administration share their opinions and make plans.
>
> Lack of time.
>
> Apparently neither students nor faculty have felt the need for one.
>
> Present schedule of classes make it impossible to meet long enough to accomplish anything.
>
> School too small and crowded.

We are undermanned and cannot give necessary time to make it successful.

Have been weighing its value and necessity with the very heavy schedule our students already have. Are considering instituting one.

Things run very satisfactory without. Unfortunate experience with one several years ago.

Have not seen any real need for one. We do have a general assembly every Wednesday in which the entire student body participates and plans.

Present superintendent and faculty thought it wise not to have one.

Decisions by council oftentimes place criticism on faculty and superintendent.

Resentment factor involved when one student counsels over another.

We are laying the foundation for one next year.

The size of these schools makes it difficult to operate a student council because of a large number of other activities included in their programs with only a small faculty to supervise the activities. Many authorities feel that it would be more important to include a student council in the school program than some of the other activities. The school administrator should carefully evaluate the outcomes of each of the activities in the program of his school and weigh them against the outcomes of the student council. The activities from which students will receive the most value should be those which are included in the school program.

The reasons for not having a student council in the school are placed in tabular form below.

TABLE 4

REASONS FOR NOT HAVING A STUDENT COUNCIL IN 1952 AS REPORTED BY THIRTY-SIX IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE 1952 SURVEY*

Reasons	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Students are not prepared for self-government.....	12	33.0
Superintendent does not want one....	10	26.8
Faculty does not want one.....	9	25.0
School board does not want one.....	4	11.1
Students do not want one.....	3	8.4
No demand for one.....	3	8.4
Have home room system.....	1	2.8

*Number of schools total more than thirty-six as some gave more than one reason for failure.

The total number of schools answering to all of the reasons is larger than thirty-six due to the fact that in most cases there were more than one reason for not having a council in a single school.

When the school board, superintendent, or the faculty did not want a student council, space was given in the questionnaire in which the reasons were to be given. The reasons given are reported here:

Faculty does not feel student council is necessary.

Students not willing to accept leadership.

Inability to get a good sponsor.

Students would not take responsibility and initiative necessary.

Three board members have served on board for many years. The last superintendent was here for twenty-five years and in some areas we are not quite up-to-date.

I have--so does the principal--too heavy a teaching load. We also have too many extracurricular activities to have time for it.

Not needed.

Students emotionally and intellectually immature.

Why pay teachers to run the school and then to turn it over to the students. Have seen several councils in action in smaller schools. Most councils come about because of weak teachers and superintendent.

These remarks indicate that there may be need for further education to be given to all persons connected with the school. Communities differ in the type of youth within and, as a result, some may not be able to operate a student council successfully.

It is very important that a student council operate under a written constitution if it is to be an efficient organization. The schools of Iowa have shown a definite increase in the number of councils having a constitution since the 1935 survey. This is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

STATUS OF STUDENT COUNCILS IN REGARD TO HAVING A WRITTEN CONSTITUTION AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-SIX SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952 (1935 SURVEY INCLUDED)

Status	Percent of Schools 1952	Percent of Schools 1935
Have written constitution.....	63.6	36.0
No written constitution.....	34.9	64.0
Process of writing one.....	1.5	0.0

Even though there has been a definite increase in the number of councils operating under a written constitution, there is need for an even greater number to make this provision. The student council can be made more effective when its duties are clearly defined in a written document. With duties definitely assigned to the organization, the student body can watch its actions and encourage passage of regulations and the development of other activities as needed.

The most common number of members included on the councils of those schools surveyed were eight and twelve. The range reported in this survey was from four to twenty-one members, while the 1935 survey reported a range of five to thirty-eight members. Too many members will decrease the effectiveness of the organization. The membership should be as representative as possible without

having too large a membership. The following table shows the number of members on student councils as reported in the survey.

TABLE 6

NUMBER OF MEMBERS ON STUDENT COUNCILS IN 1952 AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-FIVE SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS

Number of members	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Four	1	1.5
Five	2	3.1
Six	1	1.5
Seven	3	4.6
Eight	16	24.6
Nine	9	13.8
Ten	8	12.3
Eleven	1	1.5
Twelve	15	23.1
Thirteen	3	4.6
Fourteen	3	4.6
Sixteen	1	1.5
Eighteen	1	1.5
Twenty-one	1	1.5

The method of selecting the members of the student council is a very important matter. The preferred method is by election by classes or by home rooms. The schools included in the survey realized the importance of this method of selection and were using it. The faculty should not control the selection of members of the council as some do. The methods of selection are presented in the following table.

TABLE 7

METHODS OF SELECTING MEMBERS OF STUDENT COUNCILS AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-SIX SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE 1952 SURVEY*

Method	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Elected by classes.....	46	69.7
Elected by classes and organizations.....	7	10.6
Elected by classes subject to approval by faculty.....	6	9.2
Elected by home rooms.....	1	1.5
Nominated by faculty and elected by classes.....	1	1.5
Elected by organizations.....	1	1.5
Elected by classes and organizations subject to faculty approval.....	1	1.5
Class officers automatic student council.....	1	1.5
Elected by home rooms and organizations.....	1	1.5
Nominated by classes and elected by faculty and students at large.....	1	1.5
Selected by principal and president of senior class who acts as chairman.	1	1.5

*The total of schools is greater than sixty-six since one school uses a combination of two methods in the questionnaire.

Although it seems logical not to have special qualifications required of members of the student council, over one-half of the councils studied did prescribe special

qualifications which had to be met by a student before he could be elected to the council. Age and citizenship are the only qualifications placed upon representatives in adult life; therefore, it seems to be undemocratic to deprive certain members of the student body of the privilege of serving on the council. The specific qualifications which were required of the members of the council are given in the following table.

TABLE 8

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED OF STUDENT COUNCIL MEMBERS AS REPORTED BY THIRTY-THREE SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952

Qualification	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Citizenship.....	11	33.3
Minimum scholastic average.....	26	78.7
Earning of some distinction as office in a school organization.....	5	15.2
Passing in four subjects.....	3	9.1
Passing in three subjects.....	1	1.3
Participation in some other extracurricular activity.....	1	1.3

According to the survey, the officers of the student council are usually elected by the student council. Two schools provide that the president of the senior class shall also be the president of the council. Often this will place

TABLE 9

METHODS OF SELECTING STUDENT COUNCIL OFFICERS AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-SIX SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952

Method	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Elected by the council.....	48	72.5
Elected by the student body.....	12	18.5
President elected by student body; others elected by student council....	5	7.5
Elected by class presidents.....	1	1.5

too much responsibility on one person, especially in the small school. This method would also suggest that the lower classmen are incapable of electing a qualified student to the office.

The table below shows the number of faculty members serving on the council in the school surveyed.

TABLE 10

NUMBER OF FACULTY MEMBERS ON THE STUDENT COUNCIL IN SIXTY-SIX SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952

Number	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
No members.....	1	1.5
One member.....	45	68.2
Two members.....	18	27.3
Three members.....	1	1.5
Four members.....	1	1.5

The most common number of faculty sponsors or members is one. The selection of this member or sponsor should be handled in such a way that the most capable person on the faculty will be selected. As shown in Table 11, the selection of the sponsor is usually left to the administrator.

TABLE 11

METHODS OF SELECTING STUDENT COUNCIL FACULTY IN SIXTY-FOUR SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE 1952 SURVEY

Method	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Sponsored by superintendent and/or principal.....	30	47.0
Appointed by superintendent and/or principal.....	28	43.7
Elected by student body.....	2	3.1
One by students; other by faculty..	2	3.1
Elected by students, subject to faculty approval.....	1	1.6
Elected by council.....	1	1.6

Due to the rapidity of faculty turnover in the small school, it might be best to use the superintendent and the principal as the sponsors of the council, since they tend to remain in a school system longer than the other faculty members. This would tend to provide a trained sponsor for the council for a longer period of time. For the operation of the council on a true democratic basis, it does seem best to elect the

faculty member who seems best qualified to undertake the sponsorship of the organization. Just because the sponsor is the superintendent or the principal does not mean that the council will be more efficient than if some other faculty member had the responsibility.

TABLE 12

FREQUENCY AND TIME OF STUDENT COUNCIL MEETINGS AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-SIX SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952

Frequency and Time	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Frequency:		
Biweekly	23	35.0
Weekly	17	25.8
Only on call of administrator	13	19.4
Monthly	9	13.6
As needed, no regular meeting time	4	6.2
Time:		
During school hours	55	83.5
Out of school hours	7	10.6
During noon hour	4	6.2

To be an effective organization, the council should have regularly scheduled meetings. These meetings should be scheduled on a weekly or a biweekly basis. Provision should be made for called meetings, but, if meetings are scheduled frequently there should seldom be need of called meetings. Many administrators who provide for called meetings only feel that there is not enough business to be taken up to warrant weekly or biweekly meetings. If the

council is allowed to engage in a large number of activities and to help formulate school policies, the need would be great enough to provide for frequent meetings. School time is usually given for council meetings.

The writer feels that in order to have a strong council delegates should be sent to the district and state meetings of the Iowa State Association of Student Councils. The following table shows that only about one-third of the student councils of the schools surveyed sent delegates to these meetings.

TABLE 13

NUMBER OF STUDENT COUNCILS SENDING DELEGATES TO MEETINGS OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT COUNCILS AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-SIX SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952

Practice followed	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Delegates sent to district and state meetings.....	21	31.8
Did not send delegates to district and state meetings.....	45	68.2

Since authority of the council may only be delegated by the administrator to the student council, it is essential that the right to veto action of the council be retained by him. Frequent use of the veto is undesirable since it tends to discourage any further activity on the part of the council. Most administrators in the schools surveyed retain the

right of veto, but seldom does the occasion arise for them to use it, as is shown in Table 14.

TABLE 14

USE OF VETO BY ADMINISTRATORS IN REGARD TO ACTIONS OF STUDENT COUNCILS AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-THREE SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952

Use of veto	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Right to veto retained.....	63	95.5
Frequency of the use of veto:		
Frequently.....	3	4.7
Occasionally.....	1	1.6
Seldom.....	46	73.0
Never.....	12	19.1
Advisory capacity instead of strict veto.....	1	1.6

If the students are to be allowed to participate in the government of the school, they should be permitted to cooperate with the administrator in determining the powers of the council. Much progress has been made in this respect in the last seventeen years. According to the 1935 survey, the powers of the councils were determined either by the superintendent or by the principal. It is not wise to allow the students themselves to determine the powers granted to the council, nor is it wise not to allow them to have no voice in the determination of those powers. When the cooperative method is employed, the students feel that the school is their school and are not likely to feel rebellious in regard to school policies.

The table below shows that the majority of the schools surveyed did provide for a cooperative determination of powers.

TABLE 15

DETERMINATION OF POWERS OF STUDENT COUNCIL AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-SIX SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952 (1935 SURVEY INCLUDED)

Powers Determined by	Number of Schools 1952	Percent of Schools 1952	Percent of Schools 1935
Administration and pupils.....	51	77.5	0.0
Superintendent and principal.....	9	13.7	0.0
Superintendent only....	5	7.5	25.0
Principal only.....	0	0.0	26.0
Not determined nor limited.....	1	1.5	0.0
By pupils.....	0	0.0	4.5

For the student council to be an active organization, there should be some method of obtaining finances. The majority of those schools included in the survey obtained their finances through admission to noon movies, school dances, selling candy at noon, and other similar activities. Two schools reported that they needed no finances. The board of education grants funds to the student councils of two schools. If the student council is an educational

enterprise as it should be, the board may be well justified to make such a grant. However, since the financial situation is quite difficult in most schools of the size included in the survey, the most practical means of raising funds seems to be through fund raising activities.

TABLE 16

METHODS OF FINANCING ACTIVITIES OF STUDENT COUNCILS AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-SIX SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952

Method of financing	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
By fund raising activities (noon movies, dances, and the like).....	54	72.0
Student dues.....	4	6.1
Share in activity ticket sale.....	2	3.0
Grants by school board.....	2	3.0
Coat checking at games.....	1	1.5
From class funds.....	1	1.5
No finance.....	2	3.0

In making a study of the activities carried on by the council, the writer found that the average number of activities participated in by each council was five and six-tenths.

TABLE 17

NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED ON BY A SINGLE STUDENT COUNCIL AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-SIX SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952

Number of Activities	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
One	1	1.5
Two	2	3.0
Three	4	6.1
Four	18	27.4
Five	14	21.2
Six	6	9.1
Seven	8	12.1
Eight	6	9.1
Nine	3	4.5
Ten	1	1.5
Eleven	3	4.5

The following table shows the activities engaged in by the councils in the survey.

TABLE 18

ACTIVITIES CARRIED ON BY THE STUDENT COUNCIL AS REPORTED BY SIXTY-SIX SMALL IOWA HIGH SCHOOLS IN 1952

Activities	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Social functions (planning and managing)	62	92.5
Promotion of school spirit	52	77.4
Sponsoring assembly programs	45	68.2
Sponsoring "pep" functions	42	63.6
Promotion of projects for community betterment	24	36.4

TABLE 18--Continued

Activities	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Sponsoring tournaments and intramural programs.....	23	35.0
Keeping grounds neat.....	15	22.8
Ushering at school functions.....	15	22.8
Regulation of awards (including letter awards.....	15	22.8
Supervision of corridors.....	13	19.4
Sponsoring school paper.....	9	13.2
Prescribing punishment to offenders.....	9	13.2
Managing ticket sales.....	8	12.2
Supervision of study halls.....	7	10.6
Supervision of playgrounds and parking.....	6	9.1
Helping backward pupils.....	4	6.1
Homecoming activities.....	4	6.1
Planning special programs.....	4	6.1
Noon recreation.....	3	4.6
Helps determine school policy.....	3	4.6
Act as liason between students, faculty, and administration.....	3	4.6
Freshman and seventh grade initiation.....	2	3.0
Sending "Care" packages and "March of Dimes" drive.....	1	1.5

TABLE 18--Continued

Activities	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Raising money for extracurricular activities.....	1	1.5
Charter all clubs.....	1	1.5
Build handbook of student regulations.....	1	1.5
Count all ballots.....	1	1.5
Manage school carnival.....	1	1.5
Inform student body of student council action.....	1	1.5

It should be noted that only three of the schools included in the survey had student councils which helped determine school policy. This should be one of the main purposes of the council. The majority of the councils serve merely as a social agent to plan social functions, sponsor assembly programs, and "pep" functions, and to promote school spirit. These should be activities of the student council; however, students need the opportunity of helping to determine school policies in order to give them training for participation in adult government after leaving the school.

In order to make a successful evaluation of the student council of the small high school, the writer has set up the following criteria:

1. The student council must not be instituted until there is a felt need on the part of the administration, faculty, student body, and the community.

2. The student body, faculty, and the administration must be prepared to practice democratic principles at all times in regard to the student council. They must realize the responsibilities placed upon them by the institution of such an organization.

3. A carefully planned constitution is in effect.

4. Provision is made for the election of all members, including the faculty sponsor, without the placement of special qualifications upon candidates for membership on the council.

5. The council has prestige, is the voice of the student body, and has the full cooperation of all members of the school community.

6. The council does have the privilege of passing upon and recommending changes in school policies which may be placed under the authority of the council.

7. A sufficient number of activities are carried on by the council to make the school a better type of educational institution.

8. Delegates are sent regularly to district and to state meetings of the State Association of Student Councils.

9. The veto is retained by the administrator, but it is not used merely to discourage action of the council, but to prevent action which would prove detrimental to the school community.

10. Time is given during the school day for the meetings of the council.

11. Powers are cooperatively determined by the administration and the students.

The writer feels that, if the student councils of the state meet the criteria above, there will be stronger, more active councils in those schools. In this manner, it will be possible to train a more capable citizenry which will be able to take an active part in the affairs of adult government in the future.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Findings

This study showed a great increase in the progress made toward the use of student participation in school government in the small schools of Iowa since 1935. An increase of 30 percent in the number of student councils was reported. This indicates that more administrators realize the values which the students receive through student participation in at least part of the planning and managing of school activities and the formation of school policies.

The larger number of student councils surveyed had been in operation for a period of only three years, with the average of years of operation of the student council being five years. In 1935, the average length of operation of student councils in the smaller schools of Iowa was four years. This would indicate that more councils are functioning with greater success than in 1935.

Schools not having student councils felt that there was not sufficient time for such an organization,

that the members of the school community were not prepared to undertake the successful operation of a council, and that there seemed to be no need for an organization of this type in their school. Most of the reasons given for not having a council were due to the fact that it is difficult to carry on a large program of activities in such small schools.

Only two-thirds of the schools had councils that were operating under a written constitution. Some of the returns indicated that the administrators were aware of the need for a written document and were making plans for the adoption of one.

The average number of members of the councils was found to be ten, with the largest number of councils having eight members, and the next largest number having twelve members. Most schools provided for the election of members by classes. Over three-fourths of the schools required members of the council to meet minimum scholastic standards before being elected a member of the council. The officers are usually elected by the council.

There is usually only one faculty member or sponsor of the organization and he is usually the superintendent or the principal. If the council is not sponsored by the administrator, the faculty member is usually appointed by him.

The student council usually meets weekly or biweekly during school time. Occasionally the noon hour is used as a time for meetings.

Only one-third of the student councils studied sent delegates to district and state meetings. Many councils of these schools are not even affiliated with the State Association of Student Councils.

In sixty-three of the sixty-six schools having councils, the administrator retained the right to veto but most administrators seldom found the necessity to exercise it.

Activities of the student councils are commonly financed through fund raising activities carried on by the council. Two of the councils were financed through grants from the boards of education and two were financed through a share in the activity ticket sale. Four of the schools financed the organization through the payment of student dues.

Thirty-four different activities were carried on by the councils with the largest number of the councils engaging in four activities.

Evaluation

The student council organization is operating more effectively at the present time than it has in previous

years. In most respects the council is operating on a sound democratic basis. Too few councils provide for the formation of school policy. Indication is given that most councils are feeling their way along, slowly and carefully, in an attempt to avoid failure. Many of these councils could be engaged in a wider range of activities than they are at present.

Recommendations

Upon completion of this study, the following recommendations seem to be such that would strengthen the councils in the small schools of Iowa.

1. More schools should provide for student participation in school government.
2. All student council organizations should operate under a written constitution.
3. Special qualifications should not be required of candidates for council membership.
4. Faculty members should be elected by the members of the faculty in order to arrive at the entire membership by democratic means.
5. All student councils should be affiliated with the State Association of Student Councils and delegates should be sent to district and state meetings.
6. All schools should strive constantly for a more effective council which will fit the situation in the particular school.

It is hoped that these recommendations and this study will help in some way to bring about more effective councils in the state of Iowa. There is much need for

further study to be conducted in this area. Many administrators are hunting for answers to the best means of organizing and administering the student council. Suggestions for further study are given below:

1. A study of student feelings in regard to the council in their school to determine the strong and weak points of the organization as they see it.

2. A study of council constitutions with the eventual development of a recommended constitution which could be used as a starting point for councils which are developing a constitution.

APPENDIX

Letter of Explanation Sent to Superintendents

Carlisle, Iowa

Dear Superintendent _____:

I am making a survey of the student councils in Iowa high schools which have an enrollment of seventy-five to 150 students in connection with graduate work at Drake University, in the hope that the results will improve educational practices in the schools of Iowa.

I shall appreciate it very much if you will take a little of your time to answer the enclosed questionnaire, and return it to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope which is enclosed.

If you have no student council in your school, please answer the first four questions, and return the questionnaire to me.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Jerald L. Reece

Questionnaire Concerning Student Councils in Iowa High Schools

Check the answers to the following questions as they apply to the situation as it actually exists in your school. For the sake of convenience, all student government organizations will be referred to as "student council" in this questionnaire.

1. Do you have a student council in your school?
   ____Yes ____No

2. If you have no student council, why not? Check one or more.
   ____ (a) School board does not want one.
   ____ (b) Superintendent does not want one.
   ____ (c) Faculty does not want one.
   ____ (d) Students are not prepared for self-government.
   ____ (e) Other: Specify_____
   _____

3. If you marked a, b, or c above, give reasons below:
   _____
   _____

4. If you had a student council, and it failed, what were the reasons for its failure?
   ____ Lack of capable leadership.
   ____ Lack of pupil interest.
   ____ Too much teacher direction.
   ____ Lack of faculty cooperation.
   ____ Other: Specify_____
   _____

5. How many years has your school provided for student government?
   ____ Number of years.

6. By whom are the powers and duties of the student council determined?
   ____ By the principal only.
   ____ By the superintendent only.
   ____ By the principal and the superintendent.
   ____ By the pupils themselves.
   ____ Cooperatively determined by the administration and the pupils.

7. Does the student council operate under a written constitution?
   ____Yes. ____No.

8. How are the members of the student council chosen?
____ Elected by classes.
____ Elected by home rooms.
____ Nominated by the faculty and elected by classes.
____ Elected by classes subject to approval by faculty.
____ Elected by organizations.
____ Other: Specify_____
_____

9. How many members are there on the student council?
____ Number of members.

10. Are there any special qualifications required of the members of the student council?
____Yes. ____No.

11. What, if any, are the qualifications required of the members of the student council? Check one or more.
____ Minimum scholastic average.
____ State minimum required.
____ Faculty approval.
____ Earning of some distinction, such as an office in some school organization.
____ Citizenship.
____ Other: Specify_____
_____

12. How are the officers of the student council chosen?
____ Elected by the student body.
____ Elected by the student council.
____ Appointed by the faculty.
____ Treasurer only appointed by the faculty.
____ Nominated by the faculty and elected by the student body.
____ Other: Specify_____
_____

13. How many faculty members are there on the student council?
____ Number of members.

14. How are the faculty members chosen?
____ Elected by the students.
____ Elected by the faculty.
____ Appointed by superintendent and/or principal.
____ Council sponsored by superintendent or principal.

15. How often does the student council meet?
    ____ Weekly.
    ____ Biweekly.
    ____ Monthly.
    ____ Only on call of the administrator.
    ____ Other: Specify_____
    _____

16. Is time given during the school day for meetings of the student council?
    ____ Yes. ____No.

17. Are delegates sent to district and state meetings?
    ____ Yes. ____No.

18. Is the right to veto retained by the administrator?
    ____Yes. ____No.

19. How often is the veto used by the administrator?
    ____ Very often. ____ Seldom.
    ____ Frequently. ____ Never.

20. How are the activities of the student council financed?
    ____ Grants by the school board.
    ____ Student dues.
    ____ By such fund raising activities as the carnival.

21. What activities are carried on by the student council?
    ____ Planning and managing social functions.
    ____ Sponsoring school paper.
    ____ Sponsoring tournaments and intramural programs.
    ____ Supervision of corridors.
    ____ Sponsoring assembly programs.
    ____ Ushering at school functions.
    ____ Helping backward pupils.
    ____ Supervision of study halls.
    ____ Promotion of school spirit.
    ____ Promotion of projects for community betterment.
    ____ Supervision of playgrounds and parking.
    ____ Prescribing punishment to offenders.
    ____ Keeping grounds neat.
    ____ Regulation of letter awards.
    ____ Managing of ticket sales.
    ____ Sponsoring "pep" functions.
    ____ Other: Specify_____
    _____

Remarks or suggestions concerning student councils or in regard to this survey:

High Schools Participating in the Survey

Ackley, Iowa
Adair, Iowa
Agency, Iowa
Albert City, Iowa
Alden, Iowa
Allison, Iowa
Anita, Iowa
Aplington, Iowa
Arlington, Iowa
Arnolds Park, Iowa
Attica, Iowa
Avoca, Iowa
Battle Creek, Iowa
Brighton, Iowa
Calmar, Iowa
Casey, Iowa
Castana, Iowa
Central City, Iowa
Charter Oak, Iowa
Cincinnati, Iowa
Clarence, Iowa
Colesburg, Iowa
Conrad, Iowa
Correctionville, Iowa
Dexter, Iowa
Dike, Iowa
Dows, Iowa
Dunkerton, Iowa
Guttenberg, Iowa
Hedrick, Iowa
Holstein, Iowa
Hudson, Iowa
Hull, Iowa
Huxley, Iowa
Inwood, Iowa
Johnston, Iowa
Keosauqua, Iowa
Keota, Iowa
Kingsley, Iowa
Klemme, Iowa
Lake View, Iowa
Lamont, Iowa
Lawler, Iowa
Lehigh, Iowa
Lewis, Iowa
Lisbone, Iowa
Logan, Iowa
Dysart, Iowa

Dallas Center, Iowa
Danville, Iowa
Denmark, Iowa
Elk Horn, Iowa
Essex, Iowa
Everly, Iowa
Farragut, Iowa
Latimer, Iowa
Garnavillo, Iowa
George, Iowa
Gilmore City, Iowa
Gladbrook, Iowa
Gowrie, Iowa
Lohrville, Iowa
Lost Nation, Iowa
Lovilia, Iowa
Luverne, Iowa
Mallard, Iowa
Malvern, Iowa
Manly, Iowa
Marcus, Iowa
Maxwell, Iowa
Mediapolis, Iowa
Menlo, Iowa
Milford, Iowa
Earlham, Iowa
Edgewood, Iowa
Elkader, Iowa
New Hall, Iowa
New London, Iowa
New Virginia, Iowa
Nora Springs, Iowa
Norwalk, Iowa
Norway, Iowa
Ocheyedan, Iowa
Odeboldt, Iowa
Orange City, Iowa
Orient, Iowa
Panora, Iowa
Parkersburg, Iowa
Pleasantville, Iowa
Plymouth, Iowa
Pomeroy, Iowa
Preston, Iowa
Radcliffe, Iowa
Readlyn, Iowa
Rockwell, Iowa
Runnells, Iowa
Saint Ansgar, Iowa
Sanborn, Iowa

Mitchellville, Iowa

Morning Sun, Iowa

Murray, Iowa

Schleswig, Iowa

Scranton, Iowa

Woodward, Iowa

Wyoming, Iowa

CONSTITUTION

Orange City, Iowa High School Student Council

In order that pupils may realize some of the problems confronting the administration of the Orange City High School and help in the solution of such problems, the student council was organized.

The Constitution of the council is as follows:

Article I. Name

The name of the organization shall be the "Orange City High School Student Council."

Article II. Purpose

The purpose of the Student Council shall be to provide a means for students to participate in school government, to stimulate self-control, and to promote the general welfare of the Orange City High School.

Article III. Membership

The Student Council shall consist of representatives from each class, three each from the junior and senior classes, and two each from the sophomore and freshman classes.

Article IV. Organization

The Student Council shall consist of ten members and the Principal of the High School shall act as advisor.

The Council officers shall be a President and a Secretary.

The President shall be nominated by petition and elected by ballot by the student body and the Secretary by the Council, a majority shall elect.

Petitions for nominating the President may be circulated during the first six weeks of school. Such petitions must carry the wording, "We the undersigned wish to have the name of (the candidate) appear on the ballot for candidate of the President of the Student Council.

Each petition must have at least twenty-five signatures from the High School, no person having signed two petitions, among which must appear the name of the candidate.

The Council shall meet every other Friday, the second, fourth, and sixth week in each six weeks' period, at 12:30 P. M. in the social science room and have a luncheon meeting once a semester. The President may at any time call a special meeting.

Article V. Duties of the Council Officers

President

Shall preside at all meetings and bring to attention matters of school interest.

Shall preside at all assembly programs if the student council is in charge of the program.

Shall appoint committees and chairmen.

Secretary

Shall keep a record of the minutes of all council proceedings.

Shall attend to all the correspondence of the council.

Shall notify the council members of all regular and special meetings.

Article VI. Duties of the Student Council

The council shall be in charge of all Homecoming activities.

The council shall be in charge of all school elections.

The council shall promote school parties at Christmas and other appropriate times.

The council shall see that the appropriate Christmas decorations are put up during that season.

The council shall select films and assembly programs for the coming year.

Article VII. Amendments

Amendments to this constitution may be made by a two-thirds vote of the council and the approval of the Principal.

CONSTITUTION OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

OF EARLHAM, IOWA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Article I. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Student Council of Earlham Senior High School, Earlham, Iowa.

Article II. Object

The object of the Council shall be to represent the ideas and feelings of the student body, to promote the welfare of the school, and to develop a greater feeling of cooperation in the school.

Article III

Any student of Earlham Senior High School regularly enrolled and doing passing work in all subjects shall be eligible for election to the Council, and shall be elected in conformity with the By-Laws of the Council.

Article IV

Section I. The officers of the Council shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The President of the Council shall be elected from the whole high school and by the whole high school in the fall. If a candidate has the majority of the votes, he is automatically elected President; but if no one receives a majority of the votes, the two highest will be voted on, and the one with the most votes will be the President. Election will be by secret ballot.

The Vice President shall be elected at the beginning of the second semester and will hold office until the second semester of the next year. He will act as President at the fall semester until a study body President can be elected. The Vice President will be elected from the Student Council. The Vice President cannot be a senior.

The Secretary and the Treasurer will be elected from the membership of the Council at the first meeting of the fall and will serve during the new year until a new one can be elected the next year.

Section II. All elections shall be by secret ballot. A majority vote of those eligible to vote is necessary for election.

Section III. If there is but one candidate for an office, or one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast in the informal ballot, the secretary may be authorized to cast the vote of the Council for such candidate by an unanimous vote of the Council.

Section IV. The officers and faculty advisor shall constitute the executive committee.

Article V. Amendments

The constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two-thirds vote of the members present, the proposed amendment, approved by the Superintendent, having been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

Section I. The faculty advisors shall be the Superintendent and/or Principal of the High School.

BY-LAWS

Article I. Membership

Section I. Representation of the Student Council shall be as follows:

1. Each class president in grades nine to twelve shall serve during the school year and until a successor is elected.
2. One more representative from each class of the opposite sex from the President shall be elected at the end of the first semester each year, for a year term. The freshman class will elect their representative at the beginning of the year to serve for the first semester. At the end of the first semester, the freshman class shall then elect a representative for a year term.
3. One representative shall be elected at the opening of school each year to represent each of the following organizations.
   a. Boys' Athletics.
   b. Girls' Athletics.
   c. Girls and Boys from Music.
   d. Re-Echo Staff.
4. A student body President, elected as per Article IV, Section I.

Section II. To be eligible for election to the Student Council a student must have received passing grades in each of the subjects taken during the semester immediately preceding the election and be passing in all work he is carrying at the time of election.

Section III. If at any time a member receives a mark below passing he shall be automatically suspended from the Student Council until the next report. If the report card next following shows no mark below passing, that person shall be reinstated in the Council; if it shows any mark below passing, his membership is automatically discontinued until the end of the year.

Section IV. If any member is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Council without an excused absence, he shall automatically lose his membership in the Council.

Section V. Vacancies occurring in the representation of any group shall be filed by such group subject to approval of the superintendent.

Article II. Meetings

Section I. The regular meetings of the Council shall be held each Tuesday, unless otherwise specified by the President.

Section II. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the President.

Article III. Committees

The executive committee of the Student Council shall have the power to appoint the following committees: assembly, awards, citizenship, social service, and publicity. Their duties will be outlined by the Council.

Article IV. Parliamentary Authority

The parliamentary authority to be followed is the Robert's Rules of Order.

Article VI. Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two-thirds vote of the members present, the proposed amendment having been approved by the Superintendent and submitted in writing at the previous meeting. Three-fourths vote of high school.

Standing Rules

All rules that have been adopted by the Student Council and are at present governing rules of activities in the school shall be in force as the standing rules of this organization and shall be in effect until amended or repealed by simple majority.

Article VII

All the powers and duties of the Constitution of the Council are delegated by the Earlham Senior High School Superintendent, and the veto power must rest with him as he is responsible to the Board of Education.

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